



Village of Mariemont

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October 22, 2015

RECEIVED

OCT 26 2015

Todd Portune

Mr. Ted Hubbard
Hamilton County Engineer
Hamilton County Engineer's Office
10480 Burlington Road
Cincinnati, OH 45231

Dear Ted,

In the past, your assistance to the Village of Mariemont has been invaluable, especially with such issues as the Village's opposition to the Eastern Corridor and the roundabout that Columbia Township proposed for the intersection of Murray Avenue and Plainville Road.

Once again, I must ask for your help. Residents and business-owners from Columbia Township have come to me to ask for my support in their opposition to the roundabout proposed for the intersection of Plainville Road and Bramble Avenue. I am happy to give them my support as this is yet another ill-conceived plan on the part of Columbia Township officials. Additionally, at the last TID meeting, you wanted to know the opinion of the Village of Mariemont. I have polled our Council members and the majority agree that we are against it, as are our Police/Fire Chief and Assistant Fire Chief.

I think it should be clarified that the proposed interchange is not a roundabout in the typical sense of the word. It is more of an 'over to the left and around-about'. The reason for this unique configuration is the lack of space available to put in the roundabout without taking out the United Dairy Farmers (UDF) store, which is something Columbia Township does not seem inclined to do. Not only would this be one of the smallest roundabouts in the world, it would also be one of the strangest.

Just as it was with my opposition to the Murray Avenue/Plainville Road roundabout, my first consideration with this new proposal is safety. In conversations with Village of Mariemont Assistant Fire Chief Jason Kiefer, I was informed that we are often called to provide mutual aid to that area in case of fires or other emergencies. The proposed roundabout would be much too small for our ladder fire truck to get through, which could delay response times or totally prevent us from responding. The same would be true when the Village was in need of mutual aid. Emergency equipment from surrounding communities would not have direct access to the Village. We cannot put up this 'road block' to safety services for any of the communities that might need them. When the Murray Avenue/Plainville Road roundabout was being considered, our Police & Fire Chief, Rick Hines, expressed serious concern about our officers being able to respond to traffic

accidents inside the roundabout. The same is true with this new plan. Since Columbia Township does not have its own police department and depends on Hamilton County for law enforcement, frequently, it is the Village of Mariemont Police Officers who are able to respond most quickly to that area. Police Chief Hines is concerned the roundabout would be an obstacle to quick response times. If there is an accident in the roundabout, with no place for those involved to pull over, the entire intersection would be totally blocked, preventing police and/or fire equipment from getting through.

It is our belief that roundabouts are not pedestrian-friendly. Many Village residents and children walk in this area as they travel to and from the UDF store. I know of at least one resident who is blind and the thought of trying to cross a roundabout completely frightens him. She has said it would greatly limit his ability to walk through that area.

Those are just the highlights of our concerns about safety.

Equally upsetting is that the proposed roundabout would require the closing of some businesses and destruction of those properties. The new roundabout might be more attractive than the current intersection, but at a time when our economy is just starting to rebound, we cannot toss established business aside for the sake of aesthetics. Wouldn't it make more sense to work with those businesses to beautify the area with landscaping and other features?

The opinion of local residents should matter and, according to a petition signed by 400+ citizens and presented to Columbia Township Trustees, many of them do not want this roundabout, but Columbia Township officials do not seem to be listening. Those officials were elected to represent the very people they are ignoring.

You have been with the county long enough to see many such proposals come and go. Surely, you have seen the push by Columbia Township to put in a roundabout somewhere or anywhere they can. I am not certain what their fascination with roundabouts is based on, but they are not the answer for areas like ours, where streets are narrow, space is limited, infrastructure is crumbling, and businesses must be lost to make room for them. It would only be a waste of taxpayer dollars that could be directed to the failing Brent Spence Bridge or other necessary repairs.

Therefore, I am asking that you lend your support to the Village of Mariemont and the businesses and residents who would be effected by this ill-advised plan by joining in our opposition of the Bramble Avenue/Plainville Road roundabout.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,



Dan Policastro
Mayor

PC: Hamilton County Commissioner Todd Portune
Hamilton County Commissioner Chris Monzel
Hamilton County Commissioner Greg Hartman
City of Cincinnati Mayor John Cranley